

DC

UNIVERSE

54

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WHO IS

NIGHTWING?



CHRIS
MOONEYHAN
FILARDI

FEAR

The
Answers
Within!

LOBDELL
NICIEZA
BROWN
CONRAD
FILARDI

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comic book joy."**

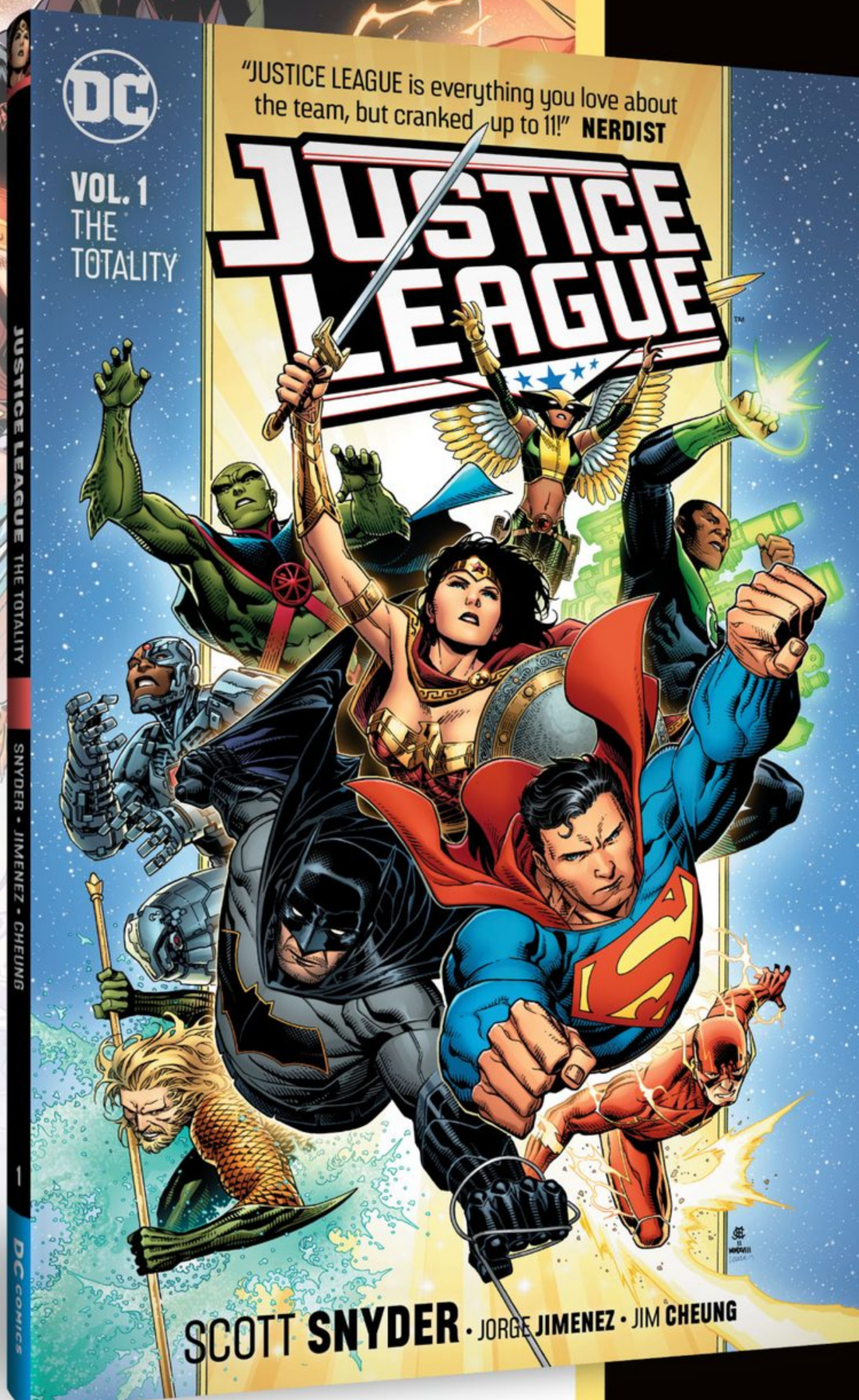
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better than
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—IGN



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NIGHTWING 54 LOBDELL • NICIEZA • BROWN • CONRAD • FILARDI

THERE ARE
SOME *LINES*
THAT SHOULDN'T
BE CROSSED,
RIGHT?

KNIGHT TERRORS

PART FIVE

STEPPING INTO AIR

SCOTT LOBDELL PLOT FABIAN NICIEZA SCRIPT
GARRY BROWN and WILL CONRAD ARTISTS
NICK FILARDI COLORS ANDWORLD DESIGN LETTERS
CHRIS MOONEYHAM and NICK FILARDI COVER
YASMINE PUTRI VARIANT COVER DAVE WIELGOSZ ASST. EDITOR
KATIE KUBERT EDITOR JAMIE S. RICH GROUP EDITOR
NIGHTWING CREATED BY MARV WOLFMAN AND GEORGE PÉREZ

LANELY POINT SHOOTING RANGE.

I MEAN,
WE'RE
COPS.

WE'RE
SUPPOSED
TO BE BETTER
THAN THE BAD
GUYS.

WE'RE
SUPPOSED
TO RESPECT
THE LAW.

NOW WE'RE
SUPPOSED TO
BECOME **NIGHTWINGS**--
METAPHORICALLY
FLYING OVER THE CITY
DISPENSING OUR
OWN VERSION OF
JUSTICE?

I'LL BE
HONEST--I'M HAVING
A HARD TIME
SQUARING THE **BPD**
BY DAY AND BEING A
SUPERHERO BY
NIGHT.

YEAH,
THAT'S A LOAD
OF HORSE
CRAP, ZAK.

YOU'RE
BEING A
COMPLETE
WUSS, LITTLE
BROTHER.

FOR YEARS
YOU'VE WHINED
THAT THE **BAD
GUYS** HAVE ALL THE
ADVANTAGES IN
BLÜDHAVEN.

NOW, WE CAN
FINALLY DO WHAT
DAD COULDN'T EVEN
THINK ABOUT DOING
WHEN HE WAS ON THE
FORCE--

--AND YOU
WANT TO **HIDE**
BEHIND THE SAME
RULES THAT HAVE
ALWAYS TIED OUR
HANDS?

WHERE ARE
YOU GOING,
COLLEEN?

TO DO
SOME
GOOD.

DAMMIT...

"I STARED AT
THAT THING FOR
THREE WEEKS..."



"...THAT
BRACELET.

"I'D LAY IN THAT
BED...I DIDN'T HAVE
MY *MEMORIES*, I
COULDN'T *TALK* OR
EVEN *FEED MYSELF*...

"...KNOWING I
COULD BE WHATEVER I
WANTED--*WHOEVER* I
WANTED--THAT'S WHAT
FUELED ME.



"AND SLOWLY, I
STARTED *WALKING*
TOWARD THAT.



"AT THE SAME TIME,
IT MEANT WALKING
AWAY FROM PEOPLE
WHO WERE THERE
FOR ME.

"NO...THERE
FOR *HIM*."



I KNOW
WHAT *MY*
REALITY
IS.

IT HAS
NOTHING TO
DO WITH THIS
GUY NAMED *DICK*
EVERYONE
SEEMS TO
LOVE.

I'M NOT
GOING TO
PRETEND I'M
SOMEONE I'M
NOT.

I THINK A LOT
OF PEOPLE WERE
DISAPPOINTED
IN ME...

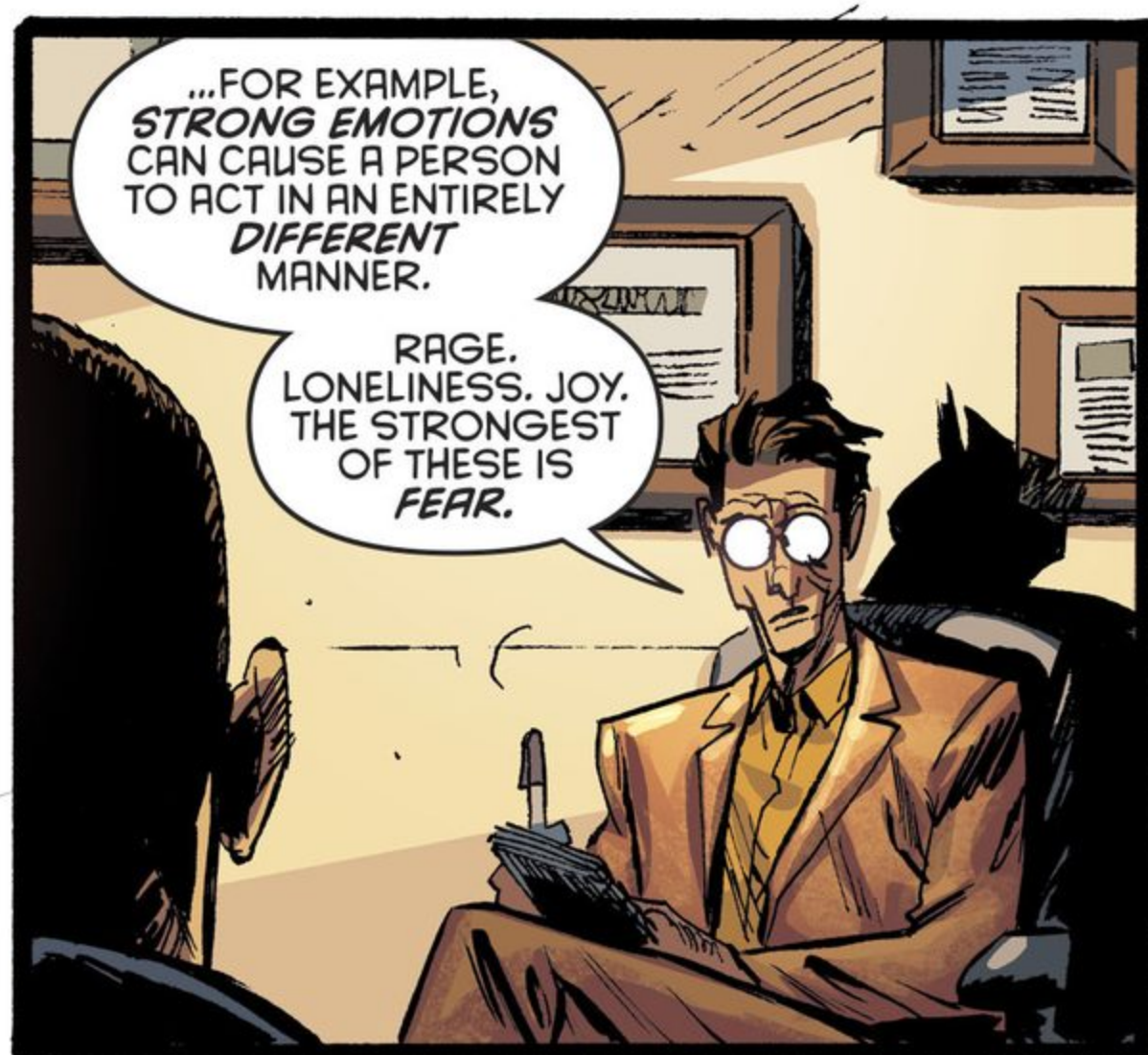


...I CAN'T
FEEL BAD ABOUT
IT, DOCTOR. AND
I *DON'T*.

I JUST WANNA
BE *ME* AND TO
HELL WITH ALL
THE NOISE.

I UNDERSTAND
THAT, *RIC*...

...BUT IT'S MY
PROFESSIONAL
BELIEF THAT THERE
IS MORE THAN ONE
TRUE PERSON
INSIDE EACH OF
US...



...FOR EXAMPLE,
STRONG EMOTIONS
CAN CAUSE A PERSON
TO ACT IN AN ENTIRELY
DIFFERENT
MANNER.

RAGE.
LONELINESS. JOY.
THE STRONGEST
OF THESE IS
FEAR.



*BEEP
BEEP*

AH,
APPARENTLY
OUR TIME IS
UP.



I'LL SEE YOU
AGAIN ON TUESDAY.
I FEEL LIKE WE'RE
REALLY MAKING
PROGRESS.

YOU KNOW, IT IS
MANDATORY BEFORE I
CAN SIGN OFF ON THE
OUT PATIENT AGREEMENT
WITH THE GOTHAM
HOSPITAL.

THANKS, *DR.
GRUIDAE*. SERIOUSLY,
EVEN THOUGH I CAN'T
WAIT TO BE DONE WITH
THIS, YOU'VE MADE
IT EASY.



YOU'RE
DOING ALL THE
HARD WORK,
RIC.

A LOT OF
THE PEOPLE
I TREAT TEND
TO RESIST
CHANGE.

MOST OF
THEM RUN AWAY
SCREAMING AT ANY
ATTEMPT ON MY
PART TO GET INTO
THEIR HEADS.

IF YOU
CAN *BELIEVE*
THAT.



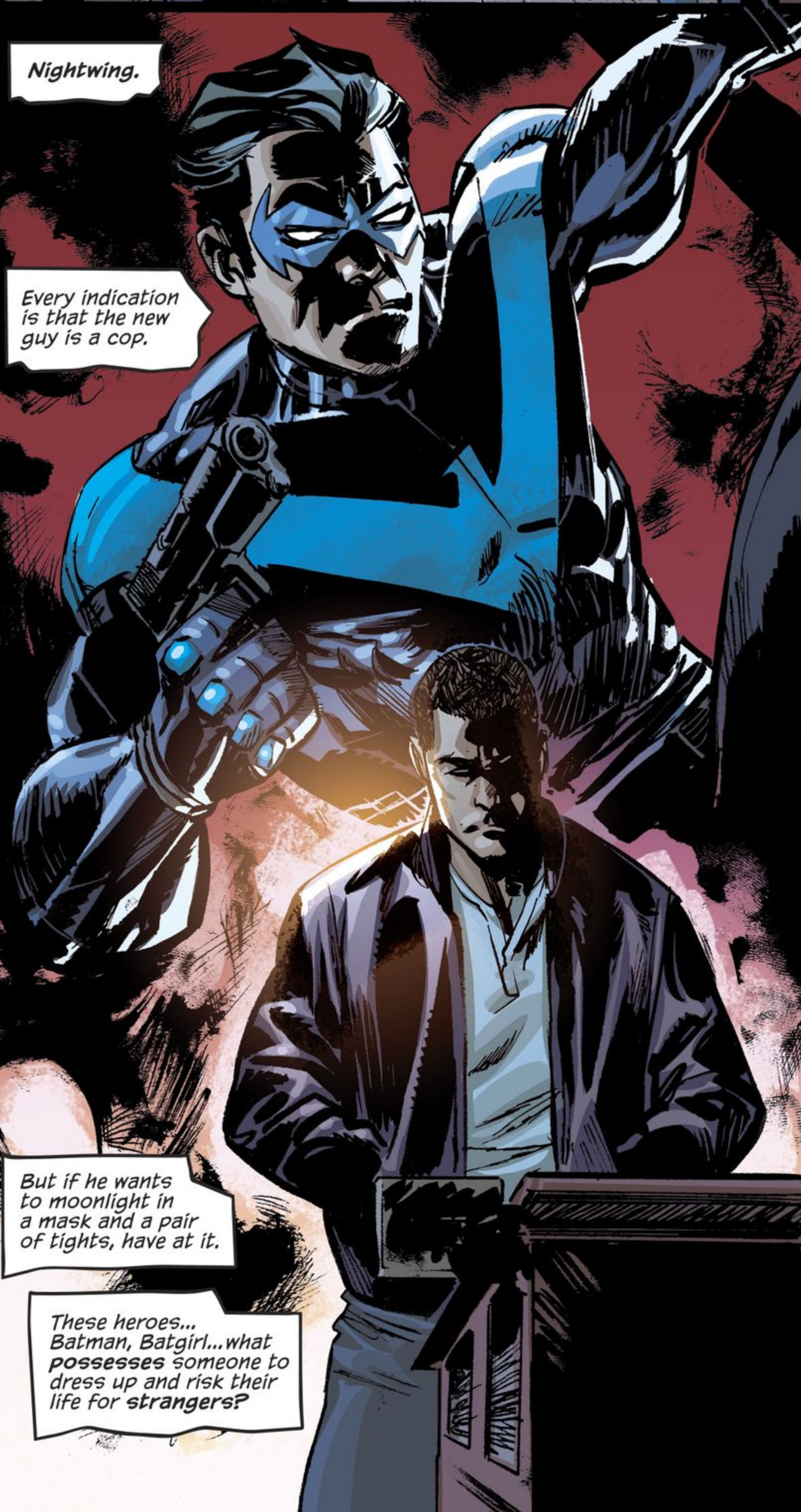
I'll be glad when this is over.

Legally and medically free to be me. Whoever *that* is.



I'll figure out what "me" is as we go along.

One thing I know is I don't want to be *this* guy.



Nightwing.

Every indication is that the new guy is a cop.

But if he wants to moonlight in a mask and a pair of tights, have at it.

These heroes... Batman, Batgirl... what possesses someone to dress up and risk their life for *strangers*?



Yet, I'm the one in therapy.

Figure that out.



I'm glad this guy is into being Nightwing.

Because I've got *zero* interest in the gig.

HALF A CITY AWAY...

FREEZE!

TO HELL
WITH YOU,
NIGHTWING!

I SHOULDN'T BE
SURPRISED...

...THUGS RARELY
FREEZE WHEN I
SAY IT HOLDING
MY BADGE.

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

SO WHY WOULD
THEY DO IT WHEN
I'M WEARING THIS
UNIFORM?

IT'S GOING TO TAKE
A LOT OF WORK TO
CLEAN UP THIS CITY.

LUCKILY...

...I DON'T HAVE
TO DO IT ALONE.

HEY, FIRST
TIME OUT AND I
BAG A BAD GUY.
COULDA, SHOULD
A BEEN A COP.

HE WOULD
HAVE BEEN.

IF MALCOLM
HUTCH HADN'T
BEEN RAILROADED
OUT OF THE
POLICE ACADEMY.

FIRE
DEPARTMENT
GOT THE BETTER
END OF THE
DEAL.

YEAH...
PAY'S FOR
CRAP EITHER WAY.
THERE'S A LOT
OF MONEY
HERE.

NO. IT'S
EVIDENCE.

HELP ME
BAG IT AND
TAG IT.

BY-
THE-BOOK
VIGILANTE. ONLY
YOU, *SAP*.

NIGHTWING,
PLEASE. WE'RE
GONNA NEED A
NEW IDENTITY
FOR YOU,
TOO...

**AVALON HEIGHTS
REHABILITATION
CENTER.
LATER.**



YEAH, WHILE I
WAS IN THE HOSPITAL,
AFTER I BLOCKED A
BULLET WITH MY
HEAD--



--A HANDFUL
OF PEOPLE
CAME TO SEE
ME.

SORT
OF.

THEY
WERE THERE TO
SUPPORT THEIR
FRIEND.



BRUCE
WAYNE...BARBARA
GORDON...
THEY *CARED*
ABOUT DICK
GRAYSON.

LOVED HIM,
CLEARLY.

BUT IN
MY HEART?
NADA.

I COULDN'T CONNECT
TO ANYTHING THEY WERE
TELLING ME ABOUT MY
OLD LIFE.



ALL THEIR TALK
WAS ABOUT WHO I
WAS, WHY I GOT HURT,
HOW THE PERSON WHO
PULLED THE TRIGGER
HAD BEEN *TAKEN
CARE OF*--*

--TELLING ME I
HAD NOTHING TO
BE *AFRAID* OF...

...ALL IT DID WAS
MAKE ME REALIZE I
WASN'T AFRAID OF
ANYTHING.

I HAD AN *OPEN
ROAD* AHEAD OF ME
AND THAT DIDN'T
SCARE ME, IT
EXCITED ME.

WHAT ARE YOU
NOT PUTTING A
VOICE TO, RIC?

YOU DON'T FEAR
YOUR *FUTURE*,
BUT WHAT ABOUT
YOUR *PAST*...?

*See Batman hunt
down The Beast in
BATMAN #57! --K.K.



I...I DON'T MISS WHATEVER THEY SAID I HAD...BUT...

...IT IS... INTERESTING.



I MEAN, I CAN SPEAK *TWELVE* LANGUAGES.

I COUNTED.

IN TWELVE LANGUAGES.

I CAN TAKE A GUN APART AND PUT IT BACK TOGETHER *BLINDFOLDED*.



WHO... *WAS* DICK GRAYSON?

WHAT KIND OF COMMITMENT DID IT TAKE TO LEARN THAT?

I MEAN, *CRAZY* LEVELS OF WORK.

CRAZY...



IF YOU ASK ME?

THAT'S THE GUY WHO SHOULD BE SITTING HERE GETTING HIS *HEAD SHRUNK*.

NO OFFENSE.



NONE TAKEN.

EVERYONE DEALS WITH MASSIVE BRAIN TRAUMA IN THEIR OWN WAY.

SOME SPEND THE REST OF THEIR DAYS TRYING TO GET *BACK* WHAT THEY *LOST*.

YOU CHOOSE TO LIVE IN THE MOMENT.

IF I MAY, RIC, I WISH IT WAS A TALENT I POSSESSED *MYSELF*.

YOU SEEM PRETTY WELL-ADJUSTED TO ME, DOC.



I'LL SEE YOU ON FRIDAY.



I WANTED TO ASK...WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

THERE WAS AN...*INCIDENT* AT OUR FACILITY TWO WEEKS AGO.



SEVERAL PEOPLE WERE INJURED, BUT NO ONE DIED.

SOMETHING AKIN TO *GROUP PSYCHOSIS*, BUT IT WAS A UNIQUE...ALMOST *GLORIOUS*...*REJECTION OF FEAR*.

ONE OF *SEVERAL* REPORTED INCIDENTS, I BELIEVE. PERHAPS, SOMETHING IS IN THE *AIR* IN BLÜDHAVEN...?



DOC, WHEN I HEAR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED...

...I'M A PRETTY LUCKY GUY.



YES, MR. GRAYSON, YOU CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN SO FAR...

SKUNK-NARROWS DISTRICT.
NIGHT.

GET
OUT OF THE
WAY!



ST. BERNADINE'S FOOD PANTRY.
MORNING.

"...YOU'LL LEARN WE
CAN REALLY MAKE A
DIFFERENCE HERE
IN BLUDHAVEN."

THANK YOU,
MISS BEA.

THAT YOUR
BOYFRIEND
OVER THERE?

MY BOY-
WHA--?

I HEARD THE
CHATEAUBRIAND
IS SUBLIME.

RIC? YOU
REMEMBERED
I'D BE HERE?

I DID.

AND YOU
ACTUALLY
SHOWED UP BY
EIGHT A.M.?

I KNOW, CAN
YOU BELIEVE
IT?

IF YOU'RE
HERE, YOU
WORK.

FAIR ENOUGH.

She's pretty
dope.

I mean, at the *Prodigal*,
she's usually the Fiercest
Boss Lady, but here...

...there's a kindness
to her--connecting
and helping people.

Just being a part
of it makes me
think...

THE CBD [CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT].
NIGHT.

...it's more
than a dozen
Nightwings
could do...

ANOTHER PERP,
ANOTHER FOOT
CHASE.

I'M DOING AS
MUCH AS I CAN,
BUT IT'S NOT
ENOUGH.

DETECTIVE
ALPHONSE
SAPIENZA BY
DAY, NIGHTWING
BY NIGHT.

MY PARTNERS IN
VIGILANTISM--HUTCH,
ZAK AND COLLEEN ARE
PICKING UP THEIR
PATROLS...GETTING
BETTER...

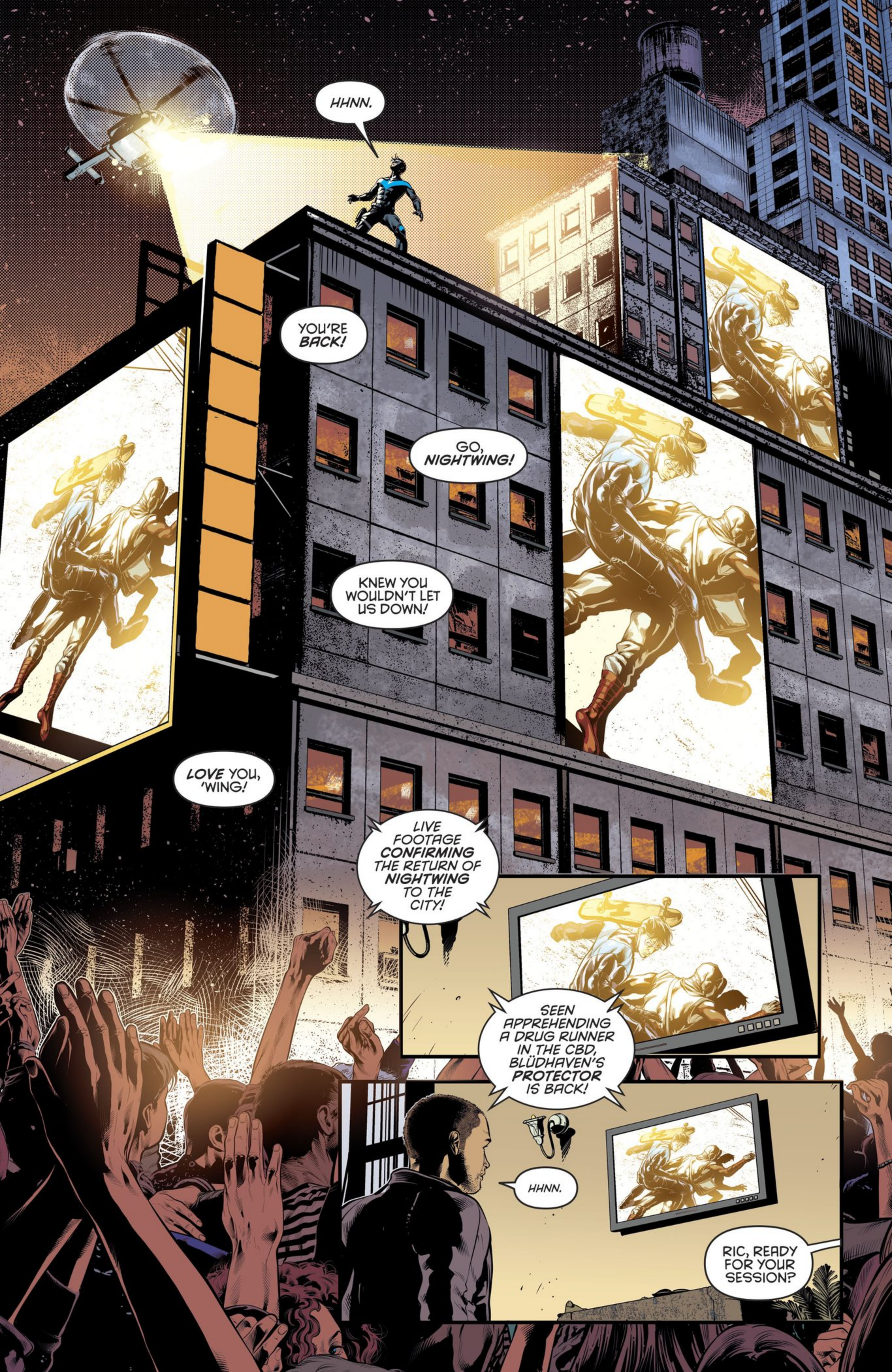
...BUT NONE OF
IT FEELS LIKE
WE'RE MAKING
A DENT.

WUSP
WUSP
WUSP

THIS IS TWO-BIT
STREET STUFF. I
NEED TO MAKE A
BIGGER...

...SPLASH?

WUMP



HHNN.

YOU'RE
BACK!

GO,
NIGHTWING!

KNEW YOU
WOULDN'T LET
US DOWN!

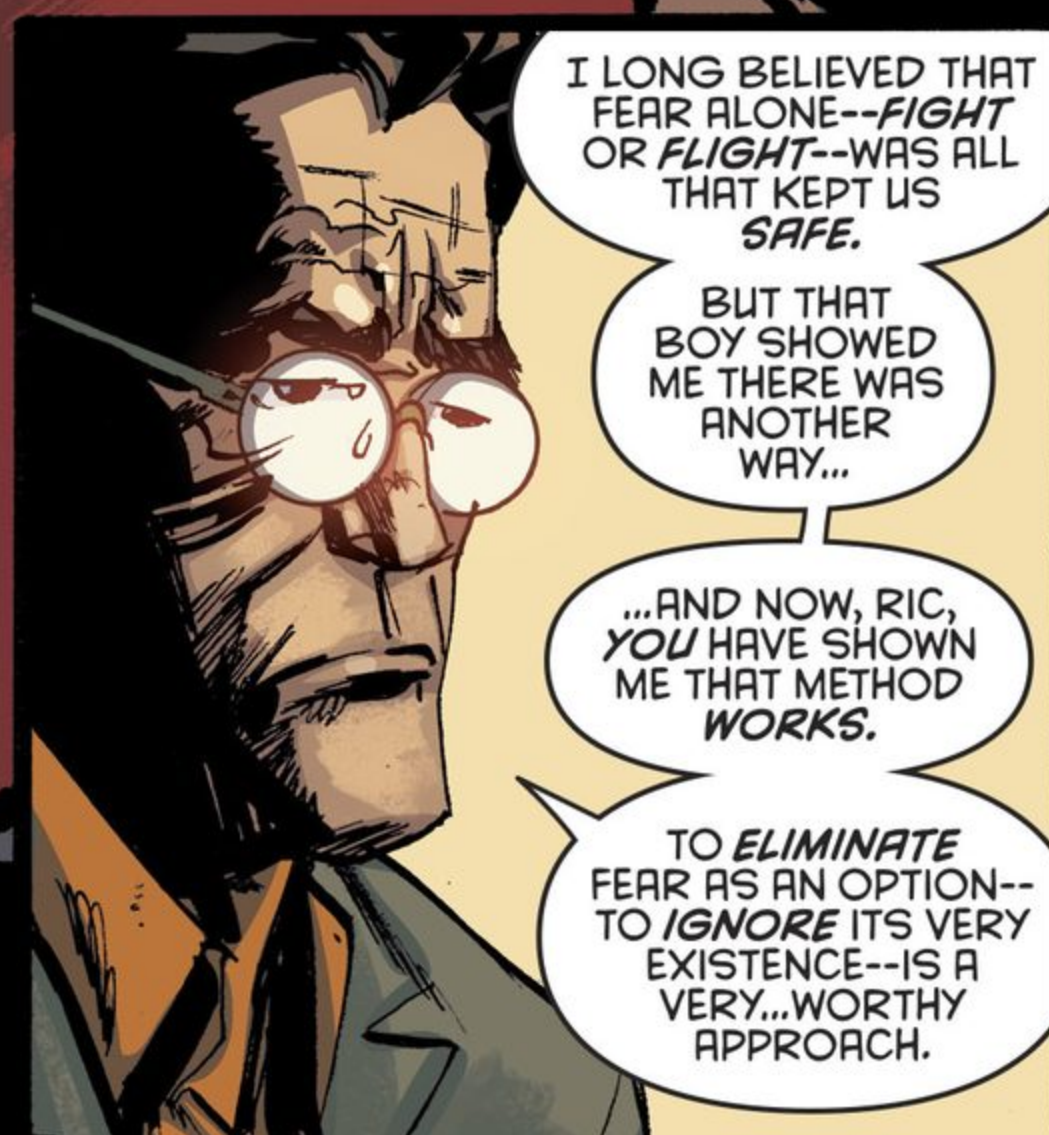
LOVE YOU,
'WING!

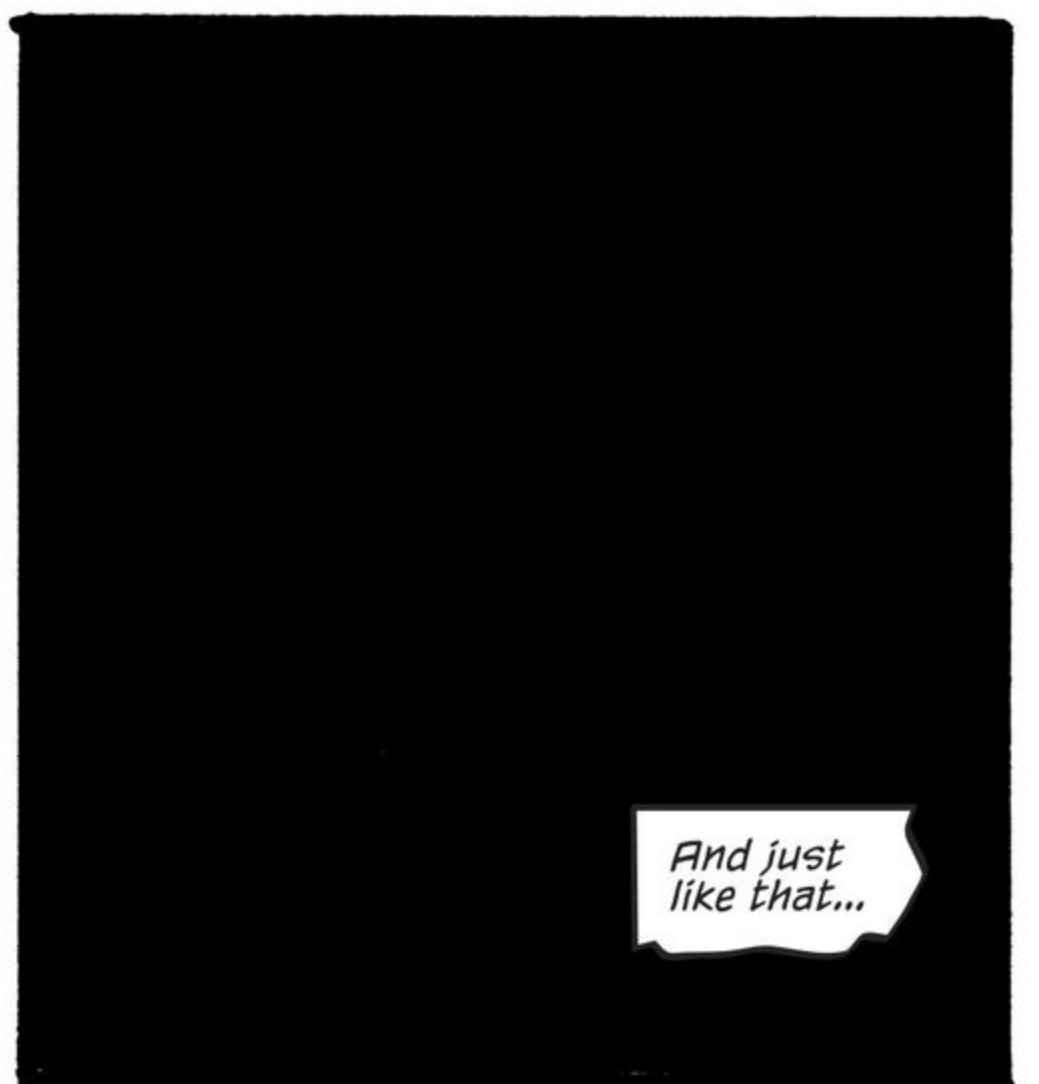
LIVE
FOOTAGE
CONFIRMING
THE RETURN OF
NIGHTWING
TO THE
CITY!

SEEN
APPREHENDING
A DRUG RUNNER
IN THE CBD,
BLÜDHAVEN'S
PROTECTOR
IS BACK!

HHNN.

RIC, READY
FOR YOUR
SESSION?







I'm never going to be you.

But I promise to be the best me that I can.



YOU REMEMBERED I'D BE HERE?

IT'S ALL ABOUT FAIR PLAY, RIC.

YOU SAID YOU WERE PRETTY SURE THIS WAS YOUR LAST SESSION. HOW DID IT GO?



IT'S SUCH A LOAD OFF, BEA. I WASN'T SWEATING THE MEDICAL CLEARANCE, BUT...

...I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT, IT FEELS LIKE I CAN *FINALLY* START FOR REAL. STARTING RIGHT NOW, I CAN BE *RIC GRAYSON*.



SOUNDS LIKE THIS CALLS FOR A *CELEBRATION*.



YOU WANNA GRAB A BITE OR SOMETHI--

DEFINITELY SOMETHING.

I've wanted to do that for the last week.

But how do you kiss someone else when you can't be sure who they're kissing back?

That's not a problem for me anymore.

THE SUITES AT AVALON HEIGHTS. NIGHT.

I KNOW I'VE
BEEN BORING
YOU WITH ALL
THIS TALK...

...BUT
I FOUND HIM
TO BE THE MOST
FASCINATING
PATIENT.

YOU WOULD
HAVE LIKED
HIM.

SO FULL OF
BRAVADO AND
CONFIDENCE.

YET, THERE IS AN
INHERENT INNOCENCE--
OR *LONELINESS*,
MAYBE--THAT IS...
ENDERING.

AND MY
DISCUSSIONS WITH
HIM HAVE BEEN
REVELATORY.

THE VERY TOOLS I
USE TO *DESTROY*
MY PATIENTS CAN
BE USED TO *HELP*
THEM AS WELL.

IT IS...
INCREDIBLE,
ISN'T IT?
PSYCHIATRY IS
A WONDROUS
THING.

THE ODDEST
THING, TOO, SO FULL
OF SPIRIT AND SPUNK,
CONFIDENCE AND
COCKINESS WAS
THE PATIENT--

--THAT
HE REALLY
REMINDED ME
OF *YOU*, AND
YOU KNOW...



...HOW MUCH
I HATE BEING
REMINDED OF
YOU!

BUT MY
DISCUSSION WITH
THIS YOUNG MAN MADE
IT VERY *CLEAR* TO ME
THAT I NEED NOT
FEAR MY PATH.

I SHOULD
EMBRACE IT! I
SHOULD *REVEL* IN
HOW I WILL HELP
THIS *ENTIRE CITY*
OVERCOME ITS
FEARS!

THE ROAD
AHEAD IS SO
EXCITING,
ISN'T IT...?

NEXT:

**NO NEED
TO FEAR!**

THRILLING ALL-NEW ANNUALS!



The League has to fix the Source Wall or the Multiverse will collapse!

JUSTICE LEAGUE ANNUAL #1

WRITTEN BY JAMES TYNION IV & SCOTT SNYDER
ART BY DANIEL SAMPERE

Robin battles the Red Hood!

TEEN TITANS ANNUAL #1

WRITTEN BY ADAM GLASS
ART BY RYAN BENJAMIN

TEEN TITANS



TM & © DC Comics.



The Fastest Man Alive vs. Godspeed!

THE FLASH ANNUAL #1

WRITTEN BY JOSHUA WILLIAMSON
ART BY SCOTT KOLINS

DC
UNIVERSE
JANUARY

HARD TIME

ARKHAM ASYLUM VS. THE PHANTOM ZONE:

Comparing DC's top two iconic super-prisons

Sure, being a super-villain sounds great. But if you get busted in the DC Universe, you could end up in Arkham Asylum—much like Slade Wilson, who is none too thrilled about the institution's amenities in *DEATHSTROKE: ARKHAM*. But how does Arkham compare to the DCU's other main repository of super-villainy, the Phantom Zone?

LOCATION! LOCATION! LOCATION!

So which super-prison has the preferable real estate? The Phantom Zone is a timeless limbo reality wedged between dimensions. Arkham Asylum is located in Gotham City—a town known for mass riots, interactive riddles and secret rooftop meetings between the cops and an emo Bat-clique.

WINNER: ARKHAM ASYLUM (*Gotham is a party!*)

NAME GAME

No denying "Arkham Asylum" evokes a creepy-cool, evil atmosphere, but "Phantom Zone" rhymes with calzone, which are delicious.

WINNER: PHANTOM ZONE (*We're writing this before lunch.*)

THE BOSS MAN

Who runs the joint? With Arkham Asylum, you've got Jeremiah Arkham, the head doc with a hobby of torturing inmates. Superman runs the Phantom Zone, and the superhero is so nice he gave his dog a cape.

WINNER: PHANTOM ZONE

MEET THE NEIGHBORS

Which facility offers more interesting cellmates? Countless alien life-forms pulled from across time and space populate the Phantom Zone. Arkham houses a talking crocodile and a clown with impeccable fashion sense.

WINNER: Kind of a toss-up, but we're going with **ARKHAM**. They've got The Joker. Even when he's gassing you with fish, who doesn't love The Joker?

DOLLAR MENU

The Phantom Zone is a realm of eternal ghosts wracked with hunger yet lacking the substance to eat. Arkham Asylum is a hospital, so, you know...hospital food.

WINNER: THE PHANTOM ZONE

THE FINAL SCORE

THE PHANTOM ZONE, 3-2. Buuuut this was a "which is worst" contest, so maybe Arkham is the real winner here? It's the best worst...? Whatever. Make your own choice!

PEEK INSIDE
ARKHAM ASYLUM IN
DEATHSTROKE
#38
ON SALE NOW!

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